

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development—Planning Division
Vacation
Vac-1458

Hearing Date: 8/15/05

Applicant: Alliance Housing, Inc., 118 E. 26th St. Rm 202, Mpls. MN 55407

Address of Property: 2740 Minnehaha Ave.

Contact Person and Phone: Kris Brogan, 3133 Bloomington #3, Mpls., MN 55407, 612-801-4942, krisbrogan@att.net

Staff Contact Person and Phone: J. Michael Orange, Principal Planner. Phone: 612-673-2347; facsimile: 673-2728; TDD: 673-2157; e-mail: michael.orange@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

Ward: 12 **Neighborhood Organization:** Longfellow Community Organization

Existing Zoning: C3S, Community Shopping Center District

Comprehensive Plan and City Goals:

- City Goal #8: Strengthen our city through infrastructure improvements.
- The *Minneapolis Plan* does not contain policies that provide direct guidance as to the proposed partial vacation of the water easement. Since the easement is precipitated by the Commons at Hiawatha project (refer to the Background section below and Attachment 7), it's apropos to summarize how the policies that the Planning Commission and City Council considered when they made the decisions to approve the needed permits and the rezoning of the site:
 - The *Minneapolis Plan* designates the area as a retail commercial area; it designates Lake Street as a Commercial Corridor; and the Lake and Minnehaha area as a Transit Station Area (TSA).
 - City Policies 4.1, 4.3, and 9.1 call for development of well designed moderate-density housing in appropriate locations throughout the City including along Commercial Corridors. Although the site is physically separated from Lake Street, the designated Commercial Corridor, it is adjacent to the shopping center that does front on Lake St.
 - Although the plan does not designate this shopping center as one of the two auto-oriented shopping centers referred to in Policy 4.6, the site functions as one and the plan does classify it as a retail commercial site.
 - Policies 4.16, 4.17, and 9.12 deal with designated Major Housing Sites and encourage medium-to-high-density residential "that is compatible with existing development in the area" and are "in close proximity to amenities or in locations where value will be sustained over time." The Plan does not designate the area as a Major Housing Site but residential on this site would meet these other Plan objectives.
 - Several of Plan policies address development within transit station areas (TSAs). The policies encourage higher residential and commercial densities, pedestrian orientation,

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and limited parking. The design and density of the project are consistent with these policies.

- The project is consistent with the “Hiawatha / Lake Station Area Plan.” It includes infill retail consistent with the “Preferred Alternative” plan, it is designed consistent with “smart growth” principles, and it brings additional retail, new jobs, and mixed-income housing on to an underutilized area with potential commercial growth. At 5 stories, the height of the project is also consistent with plan’s policies.

Proposed Use: Alliance Housing, Inc. is seeking to vacate a part of a water main easement that lies on the property of the Commons at Hiawatha project located at 2740 Minnehaha Ave. Alliance Housing, Inc. is seeking to construct a mixed-use development at 2740 Minnehaha Ave. The site is in the present parking lot for the Minnehaha Mall and is described as follows: south of the railroad right-of-way, west of vacated 25th Ave. S., north of vacated 27th St. E., and east of the railroad road right-of-way. The development will face Minnehaha Ave. and include 15,000 sq. ft. of retail with 59 surface stalls, and 80 units of housing in a 5-story, 66-ft.-high building with underground parking for 41 vehicles for the residents. Of the 80 residential units, 16 will be market rate apartments and 64 will be rented to low-income, single, working adults and low-to-moderate income families looking for housing close to transit, retail, and employment. The site is close to the Seward Industrial Park, the retail stores in the Minnehaha Mall—Target, Cub Foods, and Rainbow Foods as well as other smaller retail and service businesses. The applicants will market the units primarily to people currently working in the area as well as future employees. The project will include 40 efficiencies, 24 one-bedroom apartments, and 16 two-bedroom apartments (Attachment 7).

The Planning Commission and City Council took actions earlier this year that approved the rezoning of the site and five additional permits to allow the construction of the project.

Background: Refer to the above section and Attachment 2-6.

Development Plan: Refer to Attachment 7.

Other Zoning Applications Required: No other approvals are required.

Responses from Utilities and Affected Property Owners: Notice for the proposed vacation was sent on 4/22/05 to the appropriate list of governmental agencies and utility companies seeking their input. The following summarizes the responses received to date:

- Minneapolis Public Works: Recommends approval of vacation subject to the legal description contained in attached letter (Attachment 8).
- Minneapolis Fire Department: Conditional approval of vacation subject to final approval based on final plans and/or any changes submitted.
- Minnesota Department of Transportation: No objection to the vacation.
- Hennepin County Transportation Department: No objection to the vacation.
- Xcel Energy: No objection to vacation and no request for easement rights.
- MCI: The letter from the company claimed it has facilities within the construction area and stated specified methods to avoid potential conflicts with MCI facilities. However, the company

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map upon which the statement was based shows MCI facilities well beyond the vicinity of the project site and certainly not within the area reserved by the City for a water easement.

- Center Point Energy: Approved the vacation petition.

Findings: The Public Works Department and the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development – Planning Division find that the area proposed for vacation is not needed for any public purpose, that it is not part of a public transportation corridor, and that it can be vacated if any easements requested above are granted by the petitioner.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development – Planning Division for the proposed vacation of a part of a water main easement that lies on the property of the Commons at Hiawatha project located at 2740 Minnehaha Ave.

The Department of Community Planning & Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council approve the proposed vacation of a part of a water main easement that lies on the property of the Commons at Hiawatha project located at 2740 Minnehaha Ave.

Attachments:

1. Zoning and lot lines in the vicinity
2. Vacation application letter
3. Description of easement
4. Map and aerial photo of easement
5. Easement sketch
6. Legal description of housing parcel
7. Development plan
8. Public Works letter